REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicant responds herein to the Final Office Action of February 6, 2007.

Claims 1, 4-6, 8, 10, 11 and 15-22 are currently pending in the Application. Claims 1, 4-6, 8, 10, 11 and 15-22 were rejected in the Office Action. Applicant canceled previously withdrawn Claims 13, 23 and 24 and amended Claim 8. Reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 5, 6 and 12 were rejected in the Office Action under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Sato et al. (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0059947). Claims 1, 4-6, 8, 10-11 and 15-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Okuda et al. (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0035762).

Claim 1 of the present application requires that the oxidation liquid supply mechanism and the physical cleaning mechanism have individual nozzles. That is, the oxidation liquid supply mechanism has an oxidation liquid nozzle, and the physical cleaning mechanism has a dual fluid spray nozzle. The cleaning controller controls the oxidation liquid supply mechanism and the physical cleaning mechanism such that the jet flow of droplets is supplied from the dual fluid spray nozzle onto the substrate surface at least partly simultaneously with the oxidation liquid being supplied from the oxidation liquid nozzle onto the substrate surface. That is, the jet flow of droplets and the oxidation liquid are supplied from different nozzles onto the substrate surface.

Okuda et al. teaches that an oxidation liquid is supplied with the dual fluid spray nozzle. However, Okuda et al. fails to teach an arrangement in which a jet flow of droplets of treatment liquid is supplied from one nozzle onto the substrate surface, while the oxidation liquid is supplied from another nozzle onto the substrate surface. Instead, one of the two nozzles (for example, nozzle 3007 in Fig. 17) supplies a remover liquid, while the other nozzle (for example, nozzle 3009 in Fig. 17) supplies deionized water. Neither of the two nozzles is a dual fluid spray nozzle, as required by Claim 1.

The device shown in Sato et al. includes a gas discharging nozzle 100 and a liquid discharging nozzle 200, both being combined within the cleaning mechanism 7. However, there is no separate oxidation liquid supply structure in Sato. Consequently, there is no disclosure or even a suggestion in Sato that the dual nozzle fluid cleaning mechanism is used to supply a jet flow of

droplets of treatment liquid onto the substrate surface, while the oxidation mechanism is used to supply the oxidation liquid. In view of this, Claim 1 and its dependent claims are distinguishable from the cited prior art.

As to current Claim 8, the claim has been amended to clarify that the oxidation liquid is supplied from an oxidation liquid nozzle. Further, the physical cleaning step includes a step of supplying a jet flow of droplets of a treatment liquid from a dual fluid spray nozzle onto the substrate surface and is carried out at least partly simultaneously with the oxidation step. Accordingly, arguments presented above with respect to Claim 1 are equally applicable to Claim 8. In view of this, Claim 8 and its dependent claims are distinguishable from the cited prior art.

Reconsideration of the rejections and allowance of all pending claims is respectfully requested.

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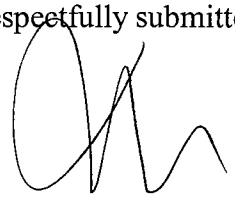
Respectfully submitted,



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